

Summary: The use of Coaching at Swiss companies

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EMCC and ICF invited learning representatives from four companies in Switzerland to speak on the current use of executive coaching in Swiss companies and the trends going forward. The participants were: **Claudius Bornemann** (PwC), **Thomas Lienhardt** (Georg Fischer), **Christoph Mahr** (ABB), and **Jan Schlüter** (SwissRe).

The conversation was two-fold – the first part focused on how coaching was developed in the organizations, how success is measured, and how coaching currently is organized. The second part was centring on the possibilities and trends of the future for coaching.

Coaching was set up in all companies quite a long time ago. It seems that the understanding of coaching is much dependent on the company culture: Engineers do not typically seem to be used to ask for help, whereas in services companies, coaching always had a different stand. Reportedly, all present companies have successfully built up a peer-coaching tradition over time.

The presenters of the four companies strongly valued coaching as an effective and economic way of supporting leaders in their issues and challenges.

Coaching is offered in a variety of ways. In general, a structured approach was chosen: From peer coaching, group coaching to one-on-one coaching to self-organized coaching as part of a leadership program. Coaching is different to mentoring. In coaching a person develops from A to B. Coaching is embedded within the wider context of organizational learning and development. Specialists are strong in peer or group coaching. In fact, peer coaching helped to install a culture of coaching as it is a less sophisticated process. As all can contribute to helping others, it is an effective way of learning.

Coaching helps performers and talents who are good already to become even better. On the other hand there are managers who have a recurring topic: How to get out of the negative loop – what are the inner drivers? This is a challenge for the professional coach. Coaching is less effective if it has to be applied as a remedial measure.

When it comes to measuring the impact and success of coaching, it is interesting to observe, that Business Leaders that have been benefiting from coaching themselves, the question of justification of coaching is not an issue but widely supported.

“A good coaching experience makes you a big fan of coaching”

Coaching is organized. Point of contact is L&D. There is a person in charge who explores and decides whether a request fits for one-on-one - or for team coaching or OD. There are internal and external coach pools. Since a close control of coaching results is not in place, mutual trust is an important asset. Coach and coachee are left on their own devices. There are no resources at hand to check all these micro-processes.

The latest approach is to managing coaching less. If someone is not a good coach, it blows up immediately. Then the coachee would call up and inform on the inconvenience or misfit. As a result, an intervention would take place. At the end, it is checked how many coachings have satisfactorily been completed and whether the coachees feel fine. An option is to invite coaches for a half day gathering to share lessons learned and learning from each other.

Most companies have been working with external coaches for quite some time. They also may take advantage of internal coaches. The costs of administration of coaching are getting too high: the selection, the mid-term evaluation, and also the evaluation at the end. Companies are looking for ways to make these processes more effective.

The following tendencies can be identified in the represented companies:

1. Per se, business leaders will be more challenged in the future: Complexity and global competitiveness will increase, leaders' empathy and charisma are getting more critical for the success of businesses.
2. The method of coaching will become more widespread, however the amount of coaching hours will remain at the current level, since peer-coaching and line manager coaching will increase in importance.
3. More team- than individual coaching is on demand; representing the company's tendency toward shared goals, shared responsibilities, and the impact of teams and collectives
4. “Coaching on the go”. Leaders need immediate quick solutions to problems they have to deal with. Whereas traditional coaching processes take too much time, companies look for “quick fix”-coaching where a leader can obtain some instant help and guidance to solve a problem. Coaching is going to take place in shorter cycles and also is more focussed on results.
5. More focus of executive coaches is expected: The attitude of coaches “I can coach it all”- is outdated.
6. More technology-based coaching: skype, phone-coachings are more on demand.



Organizer: EMCC Switzerland and ICF Switzerland

EMCC Switzerland and ICF Switzerland are the largest associations of a global alliance with a local presence in multiple locations in Switzerland. The two organizations pursue the following objectives:

1. Enforce standards in professional coaching in a local and global environment.
2. Support of members in the commitment to ethical and professional principles.
3. Promoting the teaching and practice of professional coaching.
4. Representation of professional coaching towards business and the public.

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